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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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31 January 1968East Germans Agitated Over Soviet Contacts With West Berliners

West Berlin Senat press chief Hanns Peter Herz informed [redacted] that his Soviet contacts had told him that the GDR recently protested to the Soviet Embassy against the increasing number of contacts between Soviet officials and West Berliners. The East Germans reportedly argued that such contacts should be handled by them rather than the Russians.

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To placate the East Germans, the Soviets allegedly recently set up a special West Berlin section in the Embassy under Councillor V. N. Beletsky. This section is to have formal responsibility for developing contacts in West Berlin. [redacted]

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COMMENT: The East Germans may have approached the Soviets concerning their activities in West Berlin, but, [redacted] the reported reason behind the GDR action is inconsistent with the completely negative reaction of the regime to West Berlin/West German initiatives.

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If the East Germans "protested" Soviet activities in West Berlin before December, the recent meeting between West Berlin Governing Mayor Schuetz and Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov must have triggered a rather violent reaction in East Berlin.

If the Soviet Embassy has established a "special West Berlin section," it has merely formalized a long standing arrangement under which Beletsky acted as the referent for West Berlin matters.

Issue of East German View of West Germany Raised Again

The West German news agency, DPA, reported on 29 January that Peter Florin, now East German Ambassador to Prague and a GDR "expert" on foreign affairs, has resurrected the issue of whether the GDR should consider West Germany a "foreign state."

According to DPA, Florin has written a 160-page document entitled "On the Foreign Policy of the Sovereign Socialist GDR." In this document, Florin stated that the GDR's relations with the Federal Republic belong "properly in the sphere of foreign

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policy," for the German nation today is "constituted essentially of the citizenry of two German states . . . so that relations between the two are a foreign political problem."

Florin also highlighted the issue of West German access to West Berlin. He reiterated the GDR claim that West German "expansionist" politicians are being "illegally conveyed" to Berlin by the occupation powers "in violation of the GDR's sovereign air space." Florin also reiterated the old East German offer to conclude "proper interstate agreements" on traffic to and from Berlin with the US, UK, and France.

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COMMENT: We have received no other information on Florin's treatise. He has been Ambassador to Czechoslovakia since September, however, and it is somewhat questionable that he found time to dash off a 160-page document while in Prague. This document, if it does exist, may be a dissertation which Florin wrote during 1966 while he attended a "special" school, ostensibly studying economics.

In any case, the appearance of Florin's remarks concerning the GDR regarding West Germany as a foreign state is rather strange. A similar statement by Albert Norden on 18 December caused a furor, and the East Germans backed away from this extreme position almost immediately. They later went to some lengths to make clear they did not regard West Germany as a foreign country.

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Bulgarian Unrest

Recent price increases, party leader Zhivkov's illness, and the postponement of his Cuban visit have combined to stimulate further rumors of discontent in Bulgaria. Recent examples of the stories circulating in gossip-prone Sofia include an attempt on Zhivkov's life resulting in his chauffeur being shot, and the arrest of up to 2,000 Sofia price-hike complainers. There is continuing dissent about the price rise within party circles and Zhivkov reportedly had to bring full pressure to bear to gain support for the price increase.

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COMMENT: Popular discontent because of price rises is natural, but there is no reason to believe that it poses a serious threat to Zhivkov who last appeared in public on 25 January. The Bulgarian press has announced that Zhivkov

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is ill with "severe catarrhal angina (sore throat) with ear complications." High-level disagreement about the advisability of price increases also is plausible and may account for the denials made in December of the price increases introduced in January.

Rumanian Official Comments on Regime's Goals in 1968

Rumania's two main goals in 1968 are developing the country's industrial base and playing the role of a mediator in foreign affairs, according to Rumanian Foreign Trade Minister Cioara. In making these points to a group of Rumanian trade officials early last November, Cioara added that increased industrialization would be accomplished with the assistance of West Germany, France, Italy, and hopefully the US. He also noted that Bucharest's greater cooperation with Western countries would oblige Rumania to change its "economic spirit," i.e., Rumania would continue to operate within the framework of Communism, but this would be a new type of Communism.

COMMENT: While we do not expect anything dramatically different in Bucharest's type of Communism--it already has carved out quite an independent niche for itself within the movement--Cioara's remarks generally ring true, particularly with respect to closer cooperation with Italy. Rumanian Premier Maurer and Foreign Minister Manescu completed an official visit to Italy on 23 January and met with Pope Paul VI the next day. Another Rumanian source recently said that the "Vatican and the Italians are now essential to Rumania."

Hungarian Premier Fock to Visit France

A visit by Hungarian Premier Jeno Fock is being arranged, according to the French Foreign Office desk officer for Eastern Europe. The date for this visit has not been set more specifically than "about a month from now," and neither country has announced the visit as yet. The desk officer also reports that, in addition to De Gaulle's May visit to Rumania, there would be working level consultations in Belgrade toward the end of February and consultations in Prague at an unspecified date.

COMMENT: The Budapest Conference is tentatively scheduled for 26 February through 4 March so Fock will probably visit France later than the French expect.

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Polish Party Congress in May?

The Polish party congress scheduled for this year will be held in May, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The congress must be convened "soon", since changes in the current Polish leadership are "inevitable."

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The visit in mid-January of the three Soviet leaders to Poland was made for the purpose of discussing the congress and the personnel changes.

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COMMENT: Party statutes call for a congress every four years; the last was held in June 1964. No date for this year's conclave has yet been announced. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The actual timing probably will reflect Gomulka's difficulties in constructing a new factional balance in the party, a task which he will want to accomplish before the congress.

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Although the visit of the Soviet troika to Poland probably included discussions on internal Polish problems, the fact that the Soviets continued on to East Germany indicates that events in Czechoslovakia and Berlin/Germany were at least equally important topics of discussion.

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